

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **EL PASO**

**EP**

FILE NO. **77-594**

<b>REPORT MADE AT</b> <b>EL PASO</b>	<b>DATE WHEN MADE</b> <b>9/25/48</b>	<b>PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE</b> <b>8-23, 26, 31; 9-15, 16, 17, 23, 24-48</b>	<b>REPORT MADE BY</b> <b>SA [REDACTED]</b>
<b>TITLE</b> <b>WERNHER MAGNUS MAXIMILIAN FRIEDRICH VON BRAUN</b>		<b>CHARACTER OF CASE</b> <b>SPECIAL INQUIRY - DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. GERMAN SCIENTISTS UNDER THE PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AND CONTROL OF THE JOINT INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES AGENCY.</b>	
<b>SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:</b> <p>VON BRAUN is presently residing at Fort Bliss, Texas and is employed by the Department of the Army on research and development in connection with the V-2 rocket. VON BRAUN is the designer, and was the Project Supervisor during the development and production of the V-2 rocket in Germany. During the war years VON BRAUN was a Major in the SS and a member of the NSDAP. He claims his SS commission was honorary, awarded because of his work on the V-2 rocket and his membership in the Nazi Party was a matter of expedience.</p> <p>His associates state he was not interested in politics in Germany and no information was developed from them or from U. S. Army personnel indicating his activities or conduct indicate his presence in the United States presents a risk to the internal security.</p>			
<p><b>AGENCY REQUESTED BY:</b> <b>1-31-57</b>  <b>REC'D:</b> <b>1-31-57</b>  <b>FORW:</b> <b>2-25-57</b></p> <p><b>REFERENCE:</b> Bulet to El Paso dated 8/16/48 and El Paso letter to Bureau dated 9/14/48.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR ADD. DISSEMINATION</b></p> <p><b>DETAILS:</b> Reference Bureau letter requested an investigation of WERNHER VON BRAUN to determine whether or not his presence in the United States for permanent residence presented a risk to the internal security.</p>			
<p><b>APPROVED AND FORWARDED:</b> <b>[Signature]</b>  <b>SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE</b></p> <p><b>COPIES OF THIS REPORT</b></p> <p>③ Bureau (AMSD)          2 - El Paso</p>			
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>RECORDED - 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>31 OCT 4 1948</b></p>			

security of the country.

Enclosed with the Bureau letter was a file containing background information compiled by the Department of the Army.

This file reflects that VON BRAUN is a citizen of Germany by reason of his birth there on March 23, 1912. He indicates that he attended various high schools until 1930 and the Institute of Technology at Berlin, Germany, from which he received an A. S. Degree in 1932. His personal history questionnaire indicates that he continued his studies at the University of Berlin and received a Ph. D. Degree in Physics in that institution in 1934. VON BRAUN in his personal history questionnaire reflects that he was employed by the Ordnance Department of the German Army as a civilian employee from November, 1932 until May, 1945, and that he was responsible for the development of liquid fuel rockets and served as technical director of the Rocket Experiment Station maintained by that Department.

VON BRAUN indicates that he was a member of the NSDAP and an officer in the SS. He also indicated that he was a member of the permanent aviation corps from approximately 1934 and had attended an SS horse-back riding school at Berlin in 1933 and 1934.

In connection with military service VON BRAUN indicates that he was on active duty in the Air Force for 30 days in May, 1936 and for a period of 15 days in May of 1938. He stated specifically that he participated in peace time training courses only and did not participate in any campaigns with the Army. The following affidavit was submitted by VON BRAUN on 6/18/47 concerning his affiliation with the NSDAP and other affiliated organizations of the German government:

A F F I D A V I T

of Membership in NSDAP of

Prof. Dr. Werner von Braun

- While a student at the Institute of Technology in Berlin, I joined the DLV ("Deutscher Luftsport-Verband", German Sport Aviation Club) in order to become admitted to the aviation school at Berlin-Staaken. There I made my pilot's license in summer 1933. At that time the DLV

- was no political organization. In summer 1934 the club was absorbed by the N. S. Fliegerkorps (National Socialist Aviation Corps). All members of the DLV were taken over automatically by the latter. I remained a member of the Fliegerkorps until approximately summer 1935.
- In fall 1933, I joined the SS-horseback riding school of the "Reitersturm I" at Berlin-Halensee. I was there twice a week and took riding lessons. The entire outfit did never participate in any activity whatever outside the riding school during my connection with it. In summer 1934, I got my discharge from the "Reitersturm".
- In 1939, I was officially demanded to join the National Socialist Party. At this time I was already Technical Director of the Army Rocket Center at Peenemuende (Baltic Sea). The technical work carried out there had, in the meantime attracted more and more attention in higher levels. Thus, my refusal to join the party would have meant that I would have had to abandon the work of my life. Therefore, I decided to join. My membership in the party did not involve any political activity.
- In spring, 1940, one SS-Standartenfuhrer (SS-colonel) Mueller from Greifswald, a bigger town in the vicinity of Peenemuende, looked me up in my office at Peenemuende and told me, that Reichsfuhrer SS Himmler had sent him with the order to urge me to join the SS. I told him that I was so busy with my rocket work that I had no time to spare for any political activity. He then told me, that my being in the SS would cost me no time at all. I would be awarded the rank of a "Untersturmfuhrer" (lieutenant) and it were a very definite desire of Himmler that I attend his invitation to join.
- I asked Mueller to give me some time for reflection. He agreed.
- Realizing, that the matter was of highly political significance for the relation between the SS and the Army, I called immediately on my military superior for many years in the Kriegsministerium (War Department), Major General Dr. Dornberger. He informed me that the SS had for a long time been trying to get their "finger in the pie" of the rocket work. This were an obvious new attempt to gain influence on our work. I asked him what to do. He replied on the spot that if I wanted to continue our mutual work, I had no other alternative but to join. He added that he hoped that our old cordial relation of confidence would avoid any future difficulties that could arise.

- After having received two letters of exhortation from Mueller, I finally wrote him my consent. Two weeks later, I received a letter reading that Reichsfuehrer SS Himmler had approved my request for joining the SS and had appointed me Untersturmfuehrer (lieutenant) in the staff of Obergruppenfuehrer Karsow, Stettin (whom I did not even know).
- From then on I received a written promotion every year. At the war's end I had the rank of a "Sturmbannfuehrer" (major). But nobody ever requested me to report to anyone or to do anything within the SS.
- In summer 1944, I was all of a sudden cited to Himmler's headquarters in East Prussia. I had a talk with Himmler, that lasted approximately half an hour. He told me, that he wanted to expedite the work on the V-2 missile, so that it could be put into operational use at the earliest possible date. He said he realized that the Army is "full of red tape" and that he could imagine what a "poor inventor like me" had to suffer from that kind of difficulties. I should know that he had the "open door to the Fuehrer any time at his disposal". So he could certainly help us expedite the work in a more effective way than anyone else.
- I replied that I had any help I can think of and that my superior, Major General Dornberger, were the best boss I could imagine. Any change in our present military subordination at Peenemuende could only wind up in a delay.
- I was finally dismissed without any decisions made. Himmler was obviously disappointed by my attitude. I notified Dornberger immediately.
- Approximately eight weeks later I was suddenly arrested by the Gestapo. A party of 3 Gestapo Officers woke me up at 2:00 O'clock in the morning and took me to Stettin. There I was jailed in the Gestapo prison. For 12 days I was not even notified why. Then I was told that I were suspected of Anti-Nazi utterances. Two days later General Dornberger came into the prison and told me that I was free. On the way back to Peenemuende he told me that he had had a hard time to get me out of there. He had finally declared in Hitler's headquarters that if the Gestapo would not release me, the operational use of the V-2 rocket would be out of question.
- The fact that a couple of months later SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Karsler was put in charge of the entire V-1 and V-2 program, proved Dornberger's supposition true, that Himmler has all the time been trying to get control over the Guided Missile Program in Germany.

- The only time I made use of my SS rank was during the evacuation of the rocket development facilities from Peenemünde to Bleicherode ( Central Germany), in order to prevent them from falling into Russian hands. Since at that time ( early 1945) the communication and traffic system in Germany was almost completely disorganized, this move was only possible by issuing very strict transportation orders. In issuing these orders, I turned my SS rank into account in order to put more steam under these movements.

- In addition to the SS I was a member of the following organizations:

DAF (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, Trade Union)  
 NSV (Nat. Soc Welfare Organization)  
 Deutsche Jagerschaft ( Hunting Organisation.)  
 Reichsluftschutzbund ( Air Raid Protection Organization )

- State of Texas )  
 County of El Paso )

- I, the undersigned, hereby swear ( or affirm) that the above statement and data are true and correct.

- (Signed) Dr. WERNER VON BRAUN  
 Signature

- Sworn to ( or affirmed) and subscribed before me this 18th day of June 1947.

- (Signed) Linda W. Patrick  
 LINDA W. PATRICK, Notary Public  
 In and for El Paso County, Texas  
 My commission expires June 1, 1949

At the present time VON BRAUN'S wife MARLA VON QUISTORP, his parents and brother MAGNUS reside at Fort Bliss, Texas. His brother MAGNUS is also employed by the Department of the Army as a Chemist in V-2 development.

VON BRAUN indicates that he has traveled in Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Austria, Poland, England and Belgium as a tourist between 1927 and 1939.